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AUTHOR	Ediger, Marlow
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ABSTRACT

This paper lists and dates important historical happenings related to reading instruction. John Locke (1632-1704) was an early advocate that school should be a pleasant place to learn. He believed in the "tabula rasa" theory whereby a student had a mind like a blank sheet with nothing printed initially. Starting from the conception that knowledge has to foster rather than impede the growth of a rounded personality, Locke demanded a method of education aimed at encouraging initiative, independent judgment, observation, and critical use of reason. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) advocated the use of the object lesson. Thus, if students were to read about a "dog," a model would be shown to students. Pestalozzi, like Locke, stressed that school should be a joyous place to be and humane methods of instruction should be used. Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) had his own teacher training school in which he practiced his educational theories. He believed in five essential steps of teaching: (1) teachers should prepare learners for the ensuing lesson; (2) the teacher presented the new lesson directly related to the step of preparation; (3) the learner then associated the new with the old learnings (association); (4) students thus developed generalizations, which guided them to further related ideas in reading; and (5) students were to use that which had been learned for better retention. Friedrich William Froebel (1782-1852) is credited with beginning the kindergarten movement. He believed strongly in students being creative beings. Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) emphasized life as being subjective and filled with many choices. He emphasized existentialism as a philosophy of life. Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914) was an early advocate of students engaging in problem-solving activities. (Contains 11 references.) (NKA)

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Important Historical Events in Reading Instruction.

by Marlow Ediger

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IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENTS IN READING INSTRUCTION

A plethora of events can be listed which assisted in the historical development of the reading curriculum. The salient from the lesser important needs to be chosen when listing what is important in the history of the teaching of reading. It might be too, that an individual credited with doing something vitally significant in the past had others who also practiced the same thing, sequentially or simultaneously. The author will list and date what are important happenings in reading instruction. From that time on, continual change has occurred in reading instruction.

John Locke and the Reading Curriculum

John Locke (1632- 1704) was an early advocate that school should be pleasant place to learn. In his day, teaching pupils in school resulted in endless beatings, whippings, and sarcasm. School then was a very unpleasant place to be. Rather, Locke advocated that learning should be interesting to pupils. He believed in the Tabula Rosa theory whereby a pupil had a mind like a blank sheet with nothing printed thereon initially. With good teaching, as a model, the mind imprints positive things. The teacher then is a model for pupils to emulate pertaining to what is taught.

Instead of rote learning and drill which was prevalent for pupils in his day, Locke emphasized that pupils learned through the five senses and then the mind operated upon these items. The mind then reflected upon sense input to come up with reflections such as doubting, willing, accepting, modifying, and rejecting. and relating. Locke's contributions emphasized thinking about what had been taken in by the senses. School was more than drill and memorization. Then too, Locke stressed four broad objectives of education in sequential importance:

1. Goal # one: virtue which stressed living a decent life and refraining from evil.
2. Goal # two: wisdom whereby a person develops foresight in order to make appropriate choices in life.
3. Goal # three: good breeding which stresses being able to work well with others and having good manners.
4. Goal # four: knowledge objectives which needed to be achieved. Salient, vital ends in knowledge then become important in the number four position (See Brubacher, 1966).

These four broad objectives emphasize that knowledge

alone is not adequate for a pupil to achieve, but being a well adjusted person is equally salient. Goals one through three present objectives which are very worthwhile for pupils to achieve but do not appear in state mandated tests due to their lack of measurability. Even though John Locke made his proposals in the seventeenth century, his goals on reflection pertaining to what was learned through the senses are also minimal on many state mandated tests. Certainly, Locke's concepts of doubting, modifying, rejecting, and relating, of ideas are equality important presently when reading content. He believed that education is more of a process than a product. Ulich (1950) wrote the following pertaining to Locke's emphasis upon attitudinal development within students:

Starting from the conception that knowledge has to foster, rather than to impede, the growth of an all rounded personality, Locke demanded a method of education apt to encourage initiative, independent judgment, observation, and critical use of reason. He wanted languages taught by conversation, not by grammatical exercises and memorization; generally speaking, he preferred learning by doing to learning by imitation...

Many of John Locke's ideas on education are still important today.

Johann Friedrich Pestalozzi and the Curriculum

Johann Friedrich Pestalozzi (1746- 1827) advocated the use of the object lesson in teaching. The lesson then would stress the use of real objects in teaching. Thus, if pupils were to read about a "dog," a model of this animal or an actual dog would be shown to children. Children then associate the word "dog" with the actual or model dog. Reality was always related to the abstract. In Pestalozzi's day, the abstract and rote learning alone was emphasized and pupils would be drilled until mastery occurred. Corporal punishment was used if pupils did not achieve what the teacher wanted them to learn. Pestalozzi stressed that schooling should be a joyous place to be and humane methods of instruction should be used. Learning should be natural, not coercive. Rivalry and fear should not be used to motivate pupils to learn since each pupil is different in talents and abilities. There should be no gulf between home and school; both should work together for the good of the child. Each pupil has inherent powers to use in learning. Goodwill should respect these abilities and talents. Pestalozzi was altruistic; he saw the gulf between rich and the poor and wished their elimination. The children from wealthier homes looked down

upon these from poorer home situations. Pestalozzi believed in raising humanity to new heights. The individual must be developed to new heights with his/her personal progress. Each person must have dignity and worth. Society must provide opportunities for the ethical and social growth of each pupil. All facets of a pupil need to be developed - the intellectual, the moral, and the physical side. Human beings are are a unity and cannot be divided into component parts.

In sequence, learning should move from the simple to the complex as well as from the concrete to the abstract. The teacher is like a gardner; he/she helps pupils to unfold in terms of growth in the natural environment (Eby,1964).

From the thinking of Pestalozzi, the following are considered highly important for present day teachers:

1. his emphasis upon using concrete materials of instruction with object lessons.
2. his emphasis upon quality pupil sequence such as teachers moving from the simple to the complex.
3. his emphasis upon the school being a pleasant place for learning including an appropriate environment.
4. his emphasis upon high respect for pupils and children.
5. his emphasis upon development of the total pupil such as intellectual, moral, physical, and emotional.

Johann Friedrich Herbart, Reading, and Sequence in Learning

Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776- 1841) had his own teacher training school whereby he practiced his theories of education. There were five steps of teaching which Herbart believed to be essential. The first step emphasized that teachers prepared learners for the ensuing lesson. This was the step of preparation. Thus, a pupil needed background information to benefit from the new lesson. This step sounds familiar to teachers today when they assist pupils to obtain needed information to benefit from the teaching of reading. Step two, the teacher presented the new lesson directly related to the step of preparation. Pupils were to perceive the relationship and not be left with isolated thoughts. The learner then associated the new with the old learnings in step three which is association. This assisted pupils to develop one or more generalizations. The generalization(s) guided pupils to further relate ideas in reading. Step five emphasized "use." Pupils were to use that which had been learned so that better retention, rather than forgetting would occur.

As we already know, good instruction uses the incentive inherent in interest. For this purpose the teacher must find out

what kind of presentation and learning is commensurate with the child's capacity. Otherwise the school obstructs rather than assists the growth of the child's personality. On the other hand, every individual lives in society and must learn to comply with objective standards and characteristics of every civilization. The more advanced such a civilization is, the less can the individual be permitted simply to follow his bents and affections; rather, he must be able to direct them so that his individuality serves the civilization in and on which it thrives. Only, in such ways can an individual be productive and feel himself free and happy.

Hence, there arises for the teacher, on the one hand, the obligation to cultivate the interests of the child, in order to stimulate the spontaneity; on the other hand the need not only to cultivate the child's personal interests, but to introduce him to variety of human knowledge and experiences in order to help him in the appreciation of he fundamental values of civilized societies. Such an education, Herbart would call a "liberal education."

Herbart believed strongly in character education. A study of literature and history were the two best academic areas to stress character development. Here, pupils may emulate those traits and characteristics which make for good character. Herbart identified the following traits making for curriculum improvement:

1. building background information within pupils before pursuing the new lesson in reading.
2. stimulate interest in reading.
3. relate ideas read, past with the present.
4. guide pupils to generalize on ideas read, not accept ideas in isolation only.
5. help pupils to apply what was learned and achieved.

Pertaining to Herbart, Bowyer (1970) wrote:

One of the most important and lasting contributions that Herbart made to pedagogical theory is the doctrine of interest. Interest, according to Herbart, is some inner tendency, an active power residing in the mind that urges the retention of a concept (an object of thought) in the conscientiousness or a return to the object of consciousness. The tendency is increased by the law of frequency and by the law of association. The primary task of the educator is to present the ideas constantly and consistently to the attention of the child. In this way the teacher is able to control the experiences of the child, and to provide him with the sorts of insight that will mature his judgment.

A recognition of the moral law is acted out by an exhibition

of good judgment, decisiveness, warmth, and self restraint. in all regards, and children should be educated to will the good so freely and consistently that it becomes second nature. Since it is impossible to foresee what the choices and goals of the man will be, it depends upon the teacher to prepare the child with principles that should guide the normal man to good choices and with abilities and qualifications that will enable the man to attain his goals. Therefore, it is highly essential for the instruction to cover a wide range of subjects.

Herbart believed that individuals were born as neutral beings, not good nor as sinful, bad persons. Sin being a part of the individual's lot at birth was dismissed by Herbart. People could become evil growing up in a negative environment. Each person then learns from the surrounding environment. Whatever society is like imprints itself upon the human mind, according to Herbart.

Friedrich William Froebel and the Curriculum

Friedrich Wilhem Froebel (1782- 1852) is credited with bringing the kindergarten movement into being. He believed strongly in pupils being creative beings. This idea was far removed from the thinking of his day whereby pupils were to be conformists to adult demands, be seen but not heard, and learn by memorization of subject matter. To be creative in kindergarten, Froebel emphasized the use of three kinds of learning activities for pupils:

* gifts had to do with pupils manipulating geometric figures such as cubes, lines, points, rectangular solids, cylinders, spheres, and pyramids, among others. When using these geometrical models, pupil creativity was revealed through the making of different structures. These structures included the building of houses, barns, castles, and cottages, among others. Originality in developing these structures and uses made of gifts fascinated Froebel. These uses could include building a larger cube from the smaller ones and then reduce the larger cube to the smaller original cubes. Smaller cylinders could be placed inside the larger cylinder. In return, the larger cylinder could be taken apart and separate cylinders would result.

* occupations stressed the importance of materials used such as clay to make an animal, for example. Occupations emphasized the use of a material such as clay which would modify the original source. Paper cutting also indicated how a material could be altered. Thus, a sheet of paper could be folded

several times and a bird cut from the folded paper resulting in several birds from the newly unfolded paper. Use of water colors, pencil sketching, and colored dots placed on a sheet to make a design, were further examples of occupations. With occupations, the form and shape of the original materials had been altered.

* mother play songs stressed the importance of children creatively dramatizing what was sung. For example, if pupils sang a song pertaining to raising garden crops, each would dramatize what was sung. A child then while singing would dramatize planting seeds, hoeing weeds, watering the plants, and harvesting the crops. The child involved would dramatize what was sung.

Friedrich Froebel had tremendous influence in changing the curriculum such as in

* pupils being encouraged to develop unique ideas in the school curriculum rather than duplicating what others had completed. Novel, unique ideas were wanted.
* pupils were to be taught by trained teachers using Froebel's methodology.
* pupils had definite materials of instruction to use in the classroom and school environment whereby the end result would be a creative product, involving a creative process.
* pupils were to be highly accepted by others in the school and community environment.
* pupils were encouraged to exhibit creative behavior, not pattern what others had done. They were born with creative tendencies according to Froebel (Ediger, 1988, 3).

Creative behavior is prized highly prized in today's classroom. Clay modeling, for example, is just as important presently in kindergarten as compared to Froebel's day.

Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel believed that pupils at birth were born as good, not depraved individuals. The goodness needs to be brought out from within the individual with creative behavior. In Froebel's day, the thinking was that pupils were born as evil, sinful beings. Using gifts, occupations, and mother play songs, the goodness of each individual is brought forth with creativity as an end goal.

Kierkegaard and the Curriculum

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) emphasized life as being subjective and filled with the many choices to be made. A philosophy of existentialism was born. Each decision to be made, from among alternatives, emphasizes subjectivity, not

objectivity. Kierkegaard stressed the importance of pupils making choices and decisions. This is what life is about. One first exists and then finds his/her essence or purposes in life. These are not given, but must be sought and found. It is up to the individual to find his/her own essences or purposes in life. Each individual chooses and cannot blame others for the consequences of personal choices made. There must be complete freedom to make these choices. Kierkegaard emphasized existentialism as a philosophy of life. Existentialists believe in the following concepts which are faced by human beings in daily life's situations: feelings of dread, alienation, aloness, guilt, fear of death, as well as happiness.

Kierkegaard emphasized that there are three stages of development which individuals go through in terms of morality. These are

1. stage one ... the aesthetic phase. Here, the individual decides for the self what to do with little concern for others. The self alone is what is important in life. It definitely is a selfish stage of living. Everything centers around the self.

2. stage two... the ethical phase. Here, the individual is interested in making authentic decisions. Commitments are made. Strong feelings of anxiety, and tension are in evidence. Choices are made which are awe inspiring, dreaded in the making, and might well make for alienation. Being aware of death and one's final days make for better deeds and acts by the involved person. To live a quality life, one must live as if this day is the last. One needs to know the self well in order to make authentic choices which are a duty to fulfill.

3. stage three. Here, a leap of faith needs to be made in moving from stage two to stage three, which stresses commitment and obedience. Being an authentic being, not a facade, is important in baring oneself to others as one truly is. Being conscious of the self and having a strong will is needed to possess the ideals of stage three. Faith overcomes doubt and despair (See Galbraith and Jones for discussion in comparing Piaget's and Kohlberg's theories of moral development, 1975).

When making choices from among alternatives, subjectivity is involved. Choices cannot be made objectively since the human being weighs the values of each choice and then makes a decision as to which one to pursue. There is uncertainty when choices are made in life's arena. There can even be fear and trembling, a human condition in being a moral person in society in relating to others.

It has been a long standing goal, since the early 1900s, for pupils to be able to choose and make decisions. Being able to

make good choices/decisions is perhaps as admirable goal as possible to emphasize in the curriculum as well as in life. Each person is bombarded with opportunities and chances to choose. Will the involved person then make good choices?

Learning centers in the classroom provide opportunities for each pupil to select sequential learning activities. If there are seven learning centers in the classroom with four learning activities listed on each task card per center, there are a total of 28 tasks from which pupils might choose sequentially to participate in. The teacher introduces selected centers briefly to pupils and then learners individually may select the learning center and sequential tasks to work in. Perseverance is needed to complete each sequential task chosen. There needs to be a commitment to complete what is chosen and be punctual in producing quality work. There is much freedom for the pupil to make choices in terms of learning activities to pursue. The pupil needs to be responsible to do quality work. There is an advantage in pupils working at learning centers in each academic area:

1. the pupil gets to complete what is desired and self selected, rather than someone else doing the choosing of what might not have perceived purpose or value.
2. the pupil may work at his/her optimal speed in completing a learning activity rather than someone else making unrealistic time demands in completing an activity.
3. the pupil may select what he/she can benefit most from developmentally, rather than an imposed learning activity which might be too complex or too easy and lacks challenge (See Eisner, 2002).

An individualized reading program might well stress library book titles which deal with the feelings of individuals as indicated by existentialists. A wide variety of titles and genres need to be in the offing for the child to make authentic choices as to what to read. The benefits of individualized reading to pupils are the following:

1. the pupil may select library books sequentially which capture personal interests.
2. the pupil may choose library books to read which are on his/her own unique reading level.
3. the pupil may pace his/her own optimal reading level.
4. the pupil who likes to learn by the self, as a learning style, has opportunities to do so.
5. the pupil may have a conference with the teacher after the completion of reading a library book. Here, the learner may

reveal his achievement in the completed library book and indicate feelings he/she has toward the content read (See Ediger, 2002, 107- 110).

In individualized reading, the learner is in control of what is to be read. Decision making is important in individualized reading.

In the original version of individualized reading, teachers held individual conferences with students. In reading workshop, teachers hold group as well as individual conferences. At the heart of the workshop is the time when student read self selected books, respond to their reading, or engage in group or individual conferences. Self selected reading may last approximately thirty minutes or longer. If time is available, this time may be extended. Because students will be reading their self selected books independently they should be encouraged to use appropriate strategies. Before reading, they should survey, predict, and set a purpose for reading. As they read, they should use summarizing, inferencing, and imaging strategies -- if appropriate-- and should monitor for meaning. As they read, students can use sticky notes to indicate a difficult word or puzzling passage...

Response time may last thirty minutes or longer. During response time, students may meet in a literature discussion groups to discuss their reading, write in their journals, work on an extension activity, plan a reader's theater or other type of presentation, work at one of the classroom's centers, continue to read, or attend a conference. During response time, hold individual or group conferences. If time allows, circulate around the room, giving help and guidance as needed. Visiting literature circles should be a priority (Gunning, 2000).

Charles Sanders Pierce and Experimentalism

Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914) was an early advocate of pupils engaging in problem solving activities. The consequences of an act are the most salient. Ideas can be tested in action to see which work and which are useless. Thus, if two ideas are tested in a life like situation, the consequences of each are noticed. Ideas have to be relevant and vital to be tested. If the consequences of each idea do not mater when tested, the ideas have no worth. One looks at the results, not the intent, to notice the cash value of each idea. This is opposite of learning something for its own sake, since experimentalism advocated looking at results to see what has value and what

works, as compared to the "doesn't make any difference approach when testing ideas in a life like situation." (Ediger, 1995, 63- 64).

Pierce looked upon belief as occupying the very important middle position between thought and action. Beliefs guide our desires and shape our actions. But beliefs are "unfixed" by doubts. It is when the "irritation of doubt" causes a struggle to attain belief that the enterprise of thought begins. Through doubt, we try to fix our beliefs so that we have a guide for action. There are several ways in which we can fix our beliefs, according to Pierce. There is the method of tenacity, whereby people cling to their beliefs, refusing to entertain doubts about them or consider arguments or evidence for another view. Another method is to invoke authority, as when persons in authority require the acceptance of certain ideas as true on pain of punishment. Still another method is that the metaphysician or philosopher such as Plato, Descartes, or Hegel, according to Pierce, would settle questions of belief by asking whether an idea was "agreeable to reason." With all these methods Pierce found himself in agreement precisely because they could not, in his view, achieve their intent, namely to fix or settle belief. What they all lacked was some connection with experience and behavior.

Pierce therefore offered a fourth, the method of science, whose chief virtue, he thought, was its realistic basis in experience. Unlike the methods of tenacity, authority, and reason, all of which rest upon what a person possesses within his own mind as a consequence solely of his thinking, the method of science is built on the assumption that there are real things, the characteristics of which are entirely independent of our opinions about them. Moreover because these real things affect our senses according to regular laws, we can assume they will affect each observer the same way. Beliefs that are grounded in such real things can be verified, and their "fixation" can be a public act rather than a private one. There is in fact no way to agree or disagree with a conclusion arrived at by means of the first three methods since they refer to nothing whose consequence or real existence can be tested... (Stumpf, 1971, 405- 406).

Problem solving is important presently and, no doubt, will always remain salient. Each person has problems and needs to identify them, whether in the school curriculum or in society. Each problem needs clear identification. Information needs to be obtained to solve the problem. The information, acquired from a variety of sources, needs to be tested in life like situations. That which works as a solution presents a desired course of action.

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